DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 434 733 PS 027 936

AUTHOR	Schilder, Diane
TITLE	Aiming for Accountability: Minnesota. Reaching Results.
INSTITUTION	Harvard Family Research Project, Cambridge, MA.
SPONS AGENCY	Pew Charitable Trusts, Philadelphia, PA.
PUB DATE	1998-00-00
NOTE	48p.; Compiled by the Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) Results-Based Accountability Project. For related documents, see PS 027 933-941.
AVAILABLE FROM	Harvard Family Research Project, 38 Concord Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138 ($5; 8 reports in this series plus "Lessons Learned from Eight States", $40). Tel: 617-495-9108; Fax: 617-495-8594; e-mail: hfrp_gse@harvard.edu; Web site: <http://hugse1.harvard.edu/~hfrp>.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Accountability; Case Studies; Program Descriptions; Program Design; Program Development; Program Evaluation; Program Implementation; State Action; *State Programs; *Welfare Services
IDENTIFIERS	Family Resource and Support Programs; *Minnesota

ABSTRACT

Interest is growing in planning and implementing new systems of holding child and family services accountable for results. The Results-Based Accountability (RBA) Project at the Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) has supported and built upon recent state efforts to develop these new accountability systems for child and family services. The RBA reports, including this case study, are intended to help share insights and experiences in designing and implementing RBA systems. This report on RBA in Minnesota begins with a brief overview, which summarizes the key points in the case study. A section of sociodemographic information and information about the state's governance structure directs the reader to unique qualities of the state that have helped to influence its RBA work. A timeline of the most critical events in the design and implementation of RBA efforts is included, along with a list of the key terms and concepts used in the state. Each separate RBA effort is described in detail, including its history and impetus, those who initially sponsored the effort, and the legal mechanism behind the effort. In addition, the early champions and actors involved in each effort and the funding sources and resources that support the effort are noted, and the governance and coordination between this effort and any others that may exist are described. The design and implementation of each effort are also described in detail, including information about the planning of the effort; the selection of goals, indicators, and targets; the collection of data; and the ways in which stakeholders were involved. The report describes the state infrastructure that supports the effort, such as staff, computer resources, and training. Where applicable, the report describes the way in which program evaluation links to the RBA effort. Each section also includes information about how each effort is being used; the uses include planning, citizen engagement, programming, budgeting and contracting, and communication. A list of key contacts is provided, and a final section describes in detail the objectives, scope, and methodology of the study. The

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report includes a table summarizing points of distinction among RBA efforts in the eight states studied. (EV)

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Aiming for Accountability: Minnesota. Reaching Results

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AIMING FOR ACCOUNTABILITY:

MINNESOTA

Diane Schilder

Harvard Family Research Project
Cambridge, MA
1998

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HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT

Founded in 1983 by Dr. Heather Weiss, the Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) is today at the center of a national movement to promote information regarding how states and communities are developing processes to improve and redesign child and family services and policies. HFRP's pathbreaking research provides practitioners, researchers, and policymakers with timely, insightful information about effective child and family services and policies.

Disseminating its research widely, HFRP links people, programs, ideas, and resources together to create innovative services and family-sustaining policies. HFRP's research helps states and communities create systems to monitor and assess programs and services. Using HFRP research and analysis, schools, agencies, and communities are learning about the best strategies for successful programming to improve child and family outcomes.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work was supported by a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts. The research was conducted by researchers on HFRP's Results-Based Accountability Project: Diane Schilder, Karen Horsch, Priscilla Little, Anne Brady, and Elizabeth Riel. We would like to thank the many research assistants who helped to make this publication possible: Beth Cureton, Julie Grossman, Kari Sorensen, and Carol Trauner. We would like to thank Ann Hannum, Editor, and Jessica Chapel, Editorial Assistant. The researchers would also like to thank Heather Weiss, HFRP Director, and Elena Lopez and Julia Coffman, HFRP consultants, for their comments and input on drafts on this report.

The information in this report comes, in part, from individual interviews with key contacts in Minnesota. We want to thank the many individuals who volunteered their time and expertise to contribute to this publication. This report would not have been possible without the assistance of those who shared their valuable insights about challenges and promising approaches to designing and implementing RBA efforts in Minnesota.

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MINNESOTA

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Interest in planning and implementing new systems of holding child and family services accountable for results is growing rapidly — presenting both opportunities and challenges for policymakers, practitioners, and program managers. The Results-Based Accountability (RBA) Project at the Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) has supported and built upon recent state efforts to develop these new accountability systems for child and family services.

Recent changes in welfare — with increasing responsibility at the state and local levels — have implications for these new RBA efforts. With welfare reform, states will be challenged to provide effective and efficient services for children and families with fewer resources. States have been given increased flexibility in the administration of programs, and it seems likely that they will be held more accountable for program results. In turn, many states are giving counties increased flexibility in administering these programs and plan to hold local service agencies responsible for results.

Most states are in the early stages of planning and implementing their RBA efforts. However, given the recent devolution of welfare as well as changes in managed care, these new accountability systems appear to be here to stay. While states have many promising approaches, they are finding a need for avenues to share resources and experiences, to learn about these new systems, and to obtain information about pioneering states' efforts. HFRP's RBA reports, including this case study, are intended to help share insights and experiences in designing and implementing RBA systems.

What Is Results-Based Accountability?

Policymakers, service providers, and citizens use the term "results-based accountability" in many different ways. For some, this term refers to strategic planning with an emphasis on greater coordination of services around goals and desired results. For others, the term is used to imply a shift in responsibility from the federal to state and local levels and the corresponding reduction in regulation or "red tape" — that is, it refers to a replacement of "process regulations" (such as requiring certain credentials for foster care case workers) with a requirement for results data (such as reduced case loads). For others, the term is used to refer to data collection and reporting efforts.

At a minimum, the RBA efforts described in this report include the following four elements:

- Articulation of a vision about where the state or community would like to be;
- Development of goals and objectives;
- Public reporting of data on progress toward goals and objectives; and
- Regular use of RBA process and data.

Description of the Series

This case study report is part of a series of reports of state RBA efforts. The series includes eight state case studies and a cross-site analysis. The reports are designed to provide information about the design and implementation of the RBA systems in these states. In addition, each case highlights the state's unique lessons learned. The points of distinction of the RBA efforts in each of the eight states in the series are summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Points of Distinction of State RBA Efforts

State	Points of Distinction
Florida	Florida's RBA efforts consist of three parts: statewide benchmarks, performance-based budgeting, and agency-level strategic planning. Several aspects of Florida's efforts are notable: • The active support and involvement by a variety of stakeholders, including the legislature and the private sector; • The strong focus on training and technical assistance in the state, provided by the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget and the legislatively-mandated Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability; and • The target budget approach used in the Florida Department of Children and Families, which identifies specific outcomes for the different populations the department serves.
Georgia	Georgia's RBA efforts include three parts: benchmarks for children and families, agency performance budgeting, and decentralization of some social services to the local level in exchange for a focus on results. In addition, the following characteristics distinguish the RBA efforts in Georgia: • The top-down and bottom-up approach to RBA, which focuses a variety of stakeholders on results; • The early support by foundations to enable an emphasis on meaningful, people-level results; • The climate of change that supports risk-taking and innovation; and • The establishment of mechanisms to address concerns about locally-determined strategies and accountability as well as statewide oversight.
Iowa	Iowa's RBA efforts consist of statewide measures, agency performance measures, and local-level measures. In addition, the following characteristics distinguish the Iowa case: • The use of public opinion polling, which has provided valuable citizen input; • The use of focus groups to enhance the RBA research process; and • Enterprise-wide strategic planning, which provides a framework for collaborative efforts among agencies to achieve common cross-site goals.

Minnesota	Minnesota's RBA efforts consist of statewide measures, child and family measures, agency performance measures, and local performance measures. The following characteristics also distinguish Minnesota: • The existence of multiple RBA efforts with differing origins and emphases, including the Executive Branch Minnesota Milestones, which focus on population-level goals and the legislature's performance accountability for state agencies; • The emphasis on "home grown" services, which leads to grassroots articulation and reporting of results data rather than a centralized RBA approach; and • The refinement of the Milestones and agency performance measures to build on lessons learned and to update the measures to reflect new priorities of the state's citizens.
North Carolina	North Carolina's RBA efforts consist of state agency performance budgeting, and a child and family initiative that focuses on results. In addition, the following characteristics in North Carolina are of note: • The role of the budget and planning offices in training, collecting, and analyzing performance budget data; • The political context in which the child and family initiative has been implemented and the way in which data have been used to expand this initiative; and • The quasi-experimental evaluation design used to measure the success of the child and family services initiative.
Ohio	Ohio's RBA efforts consist of a statewide framework for child and family services, decentralization of social services to the local level in exchange for a focus on results, and a state block grant and a new program that focus child and family services on results. In addition, the following elements in Ohio are noteworthy: • The strong commitment of the governor in supporting results-oriented child and family services; • Comprehensive planning efforts designed to streamline government services by focusing on results; • The greater flexibility given to county Councils in exchange for accountability that focuses on results; and • The messages from the state to the counties regarding state expectations to focus on results.

Oregon	Oregon's RBA efforts consist of a statewide framework for results, agency performance measures, and local measures. In addition, the following characteristics distinguish the efforts in Oregon: • The way in which Oregon has relied on champions as a critical element for success. Leaders in key places — the executive branch, legislature, and private sector — have all been crucial to the penetration of the concept of the Oregon Benchmarks; • The power of well-trained, highly qualified staff at all levels, which has been critical in designing the RBA effort; • The requirement that the benchmarks and strategic plans be revisited on a regular basis; • Citizen involvement as an element in the success of the RBA effort; and • The continuity of support for RBA efforts at all levels of involvement.
Vermont	Vermont's RBA efforts consist of a framework for child and family outcomes, a Department of Education (DOE) outcomes framework, and measures produced by the Agency of Human Services and the DOE. In addition, the following characteristics are significant: • The importance of establishing relationships and knowing key actors in the design and implementation of the effort; • The small size of the state, which creates relative ease in involving all stakeholders in the effort; and • The importance of foundation funding and technical assistance in establishing the RBA framework and allowing the state to be creative in using resources to implement RBA.

Audience

This case study report is part of our larger effort to disseminate information about RBA initiatives in states. The report is targeted to those responsible for designing and implementing RBA efforts for child and family services. As such, the cases include details about the history, design, implementation, and uses of each effort that could assist in designing and implementing similar efforts.

Format

Overview of Minnesota

The report begins with a brief overview which summarizes the key points in the case study.

Minnesota Context

A section of sociodemographic information and information about the state's governance structure directs the reader to unique qualities of the state that have helped to influence its RBA work. In addition, a description of the history and state/local culture provides details about the environment.

Timeline
The report includes a timeline of the most critical events in the design and implementation of the RBA efforts.

Terms and Concepts
A list of the key terms and concepts used in the state is included. Currently no standard set of definitions of RBA terms exists. States use similar terms for different concepts, and different terms for similar concepts. Additionally, we provide a list of acronyms specific to each state's RBA efforts.

Description of Each of Minnesota's RBA Efforts
Each separate RBA effort is described in detail in the case study. Each of these separate efforts is described in bold and begins a new chapter. Each section begins with a description of the history and impetus of the effort, including a description of those who initially sponsored the effort (such as the governor, legislature, or agency). We also describe the legal mechanism behind the effort (such as Executive Order, legislative mandate, etc.). In addition, the early champions and actors involved in each effort and the funding sources and resources that support the effort are noted. We also describe the governance and coordination between this effort and any others that may be in existence in the state.

The design and implementation of each effort are also described in detail. We include information about the planning of the effort (including a description of strategic planning efforts); the selection of goals, indicators, and targets; the collection of data; and the ways in which stakeholders were involved. In addition, we describe the state "infrastructure" that supports the effort, such as staff, computer resources, and training. Finally, where applicable, we describe the way in which program evaluation — specifically outcome evaluation efforts — links to the RBA effort.

Each section also includes information about how each effort is being used. The uses include planning, citizen engagement, programming, budgeting and contracting, and communication. In certain instances, the uses have yet to be determined.

Key Contacts
A list of key contacts familiar with different aspects of the effort is provided. This list is included in order to direct the reader to the experts who are most knowledgeable about many of the details of this report.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology
This section explains in detail the objectives of the study, the methodology used, and the range of states included in the series.

OVERVIEW OF MINNESOTA

Unique Features of Minnesota's RBA Efforts

The Minnesota case study provides an interesting example of a relatively homogeneous mid-western state's experiences designing, implementing, and refining multiple RBA efforts. The most widely known effort in Minnesota, the Minnesota Milestones, represents a multi-sector effort, modeled on the Oregon Benchmarks.[1] Other efforts in the state include the Children's Services Report Card, performance reporting, and Family Services and Children's Mental Health Collaboratives.

Several aspects of Minnesota's efforts are specifically notable:

- The existence of multiple RBA efforts with differing origins and emphases, including the Executive Branch Minnesota Milestones, which focus on population-level goals and the legislature's performance accountability for state agencies;
- The emphasis on "home grown" services, which leads to grassroots articulation and reporting of results data rather than a centralized RBA approach; and
- The refinement of the Milestones and agency performance measures to build on lessons learned and to update the measures to reflect new priorities of the state's citizens.

Summary of Minnesota's RBA Efforts

The Minnesota Milestones: The Minnesota Milestones are the state's multi-sector RBA effort, initiated by Governor Arne Carlson (R) in 1991. The Executive Branch strategic planning agency, the Minnesota Planning Office, was responsible for the development of the Milestones. Citizen and state agency input guided the Milestones' development. The Governor personally championed the Milestones, which are now being used to encourage citizens to solve problems facing the state. They are also used by the public, communities, and government agencies. The Milestones are designed to reflect the dynamic nature of the state of Minnesota, and are being updated in 1997-1998.

The Children's Services Report Card: The Children's Services Report Card grew out of the Milestones, and provides county-level data. The Report Card is envisioned as a way to mobilize citizen support for action on behalf of children and families. Currently, many of the indicators in the Children's Services Report Card are also measures in the Minnesota Milestones report, but the overlap is not total. The alignment of Children's Report data and Milestones data is an important next step that will be taken in 1997-98.

Performance Reporting: The Minnesota legislature initiated performance reporting in 1993. It

[1]See *Aiming for Accountability: Oregon* for details about Oregon's experience.

requires state agencies to develop strategic plans and to report performance measures bi-annually to the legislature. A second piece of legislation, the Omnibus K-12 Education, was passed in 1995; it requires a different set of performance reports from the Department of Children, Families and Learning. The Department of Finance, an Executive level agency, has been charged with overseeing the performance measures. While the legislation does not require agencies to incorporate the Milestones into performance reports, the Department of Finance has encouraged agencies to consider them. The reports are designed to provide consistent information across state agencies. While the first set of performance reports produced challenges for state agencies, steps are being taken that proponents hope will alleviate these challenges in the future.

Family Service and Mental Health Collaborative Evaluation Activities: Evaluation activities of these local Collaboratives are designed to promote the local development and use of outcome measures. The Collaboratives are local entities, established by the legislature in 1993, which receive grants for collaboration. The entities are required to establish clear goals and outcome measures addressing the health, developmental, education, and family-related needs of children and youth. Several outcome measures were specified, and Collaboratives have access to a university research group that provides technical assistance and training. While the collaborative grants fund a variety of activities, many use Children's Services Report Card and Milestones date to focus their efforts. The state has recently realized the importance of coordinating and standardizing outcomes and indicators across Collaboratives, and has devoted a team to help increase coordination.

Minnesota's various RBA efforts reflect the importance of home-grown, local solutions to problems in the state. Most child and family services in Minnesota profiled in this report are state administered but locally controlled. Therefore, the design of the RBA efforts takes into account who is responsible for achieving results as well as who has the authority to achieve them. An important next step in Minnesota is to coordinate the various RBA efforts.

MINNESOTA BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Sociodemographic and Economic Status [2]

In 1995, Minnesota had a population of 4.6 million. It was a predominantly Caucasian state; in 1995, only 6 percent of its citizens were members of a racial minority, and of these, almost half were African-American. Only 2.6 percent of the state's residents were immigrants, compared to 9.3 percent nationwide. Twenty-seven percent of Minnesota's residents were under the age of 18; this was slightly higher than the national average of 26.2 percent.

In 1995, Minnesota's per capita income was $23, 971; the median income for families with children was $41,900. In 1995, 9.2 percent of the state's population had incomes that fell below the federal poverty line, which was lower than the national average of 13.8 percent in that same year. Similarly, only 16 percent of Minnesota's children under the age of 18 lived in poverty in 1995, compared to the national average of 20.8 percent. The unemployment rate in Minnesota was 3.7 percent, which was lower than the national average of 5.3 percent, ranking Minnesota 42nd in statewide unemployment.

Political Context for Children and Families [3]

Arne Carlson (R), has served as Minnesota's governor since 1990. Both the House and the Senate are controlled by the Democratic Party, in Minnesota referred to as the Democratic Farmer Labor Party. Membership in the state legislature is stable; like Florida, Iowa, North Carolina, and Oregon, it is classified as "not quite full-time/professional."[4] The legislature meets 120 days per year; there are no term limits for seats in the Senate or the House.

Much of the activity for child and family programs in Minnesota occurs at the county level. Counties are responsible for all social services, including welfare enrollment. The counties are also legally responsible for administering children's services throughout the state. County

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[2] Information for this section was obtained from the following sources: Morgan, K.O., and Morgan, S. (1997). *State rankings, 1997: A statistical overview of the 50 United States*. Lawrence, KS: Morgan Quinto Press; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current population survey* and *state poverty rates,* online at www.census.gov; U.S. Department of Labor, *Bureau of Labor statistics*; *statistical abstract of the United States, 1996.* Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration. (116th Edition). *KIDS COUNT data book: State profiles of child well-being.* (1997). Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation. Most data are from 1995. Data from the *KIDS COUNT data book* reflect the condition of children and families in 1994.

[3] Information for this section was obtained from multiple sources, including: *The book of states, 1996-1997.* Lexington, KY: The Council of State Government; U.S. Term Limits, online at www.termlimits.org; and interviews with members of state, county, and local officials.

[4] Defined by Karl Kurtz of the National Council of State Legislatures as having a large staff, with a relatively high pay, and stable membership. See *Understanding the diversity of American state legislatures, extension of remarks.* (June 1992).

services are funded by equal contributions from county, state, and federal governments. The Board of County Commissioners must submit biannual social service and community health plans to the State, and solicit public input in the form of advisory boards and hearings.

Minnesota ranks 11th based on a composite ranking of indicators of child well-being.[5] Table 2, a selected listing of the child risk factors, illustrates this rating.

Table 2. Child Risk Factors

Rating	Year	State	U.S.
% of two-year olds who were immunized	1995	79%	75%
% of children in extreme poverty (below 50% FPL)	1994	5%	9%
% of 4th grade students who scored below basic reading level	1994	35%	41%
% of 4th grade students who scored below basic math level	1996	24%	38%
% of low birth-weight babies	1994	5.7%	7.3%
% of teen birth rate (births per 1,000 females ages 15-17)	1994	20%	38%

Local Culture [6]

Minnesota is one of the nation's leading agricultural states, although since the 1950s, manufacturing has been the state's principal source of income. Minnesota's original settlers, New Englanders, Germans, and Scandinavians, shared a common attitude toward government — that it is the legitimate means for public decision making, with both businesses and individuals playing important roles in the process. This attitude is still prevalent today; Minnesota's political culture is described as "moralistic"; ideally, every citizen shares both the resources of the state and the responsibility for running it. As a result, there is a high degree of political activism in the state.

[5] KIDS COUNT, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United States. *KIDS COUNT data book: State profiles of child well-being.* (1997). Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation. This publication provides data on the educational, social, economic, and physical well-being of children.

[6] Information for this section was compiled from Encyclopeadia Britannica Online, Encyclopedia Americana, and Elazar, D.J. (1984). *American federalism: A view from the states* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Crowell, as well as from key informant interviews.

TIMELINE

1991	• Minnesota Milestones Strategic Planning Process initiated
1992	• Minnesota Planning releases first Minnesota Milestones Report
1993	• State legislature enacts performance reporting legislation • Family services and children's Mental Health Collaboratives created • Minnesota Planning releases first Children's Services Report Card
1994	• State legislature requires the development of graduation standards • State agencies release first set of performance reports
1995	• Department of Children, Families and Learning established
1996	• Report summarizing outcomes from Family Services and Children's Mental Health Collaboratives released
1997	• Process to update Minnesota Milestones begins • Family Services and Children's Mental Health Collaboratives begin to align indicators with Minnesota Milestones goals

TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Currently no standard set of definitions of RBA terms exists. States use similar terms for different concepts, and different terms for similar concepts. Table 3 describes the terms and concepts used by Minnesota. Table 4 summarizes the acronyms used in this report.

Table 3. Key Concepts

Minnesota Milestones (capitalized) refers to the comprehensive RBA system in Minnesota. The term *milestone* (not capitalized) refers to the quantifiable measures of progress that include specified time-frames and targets against which actual achievement is compared.

Vision: Conceptual image of the core values of the citizens of Minnesota

Themes: Core values or philosophy describing how the state conducts itself

Goal: Desired long-range condition of well-being for children, families, or communities

Indicator: Quantifiable measure of progress toward condition of well-being for children, families, or communities

Performance measure: Desired improved effectiveness or efficiency of agency, program, or service delivery mechanism

Table 4. Key Acronyms

CAREI:	Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement
CMHC:	Children's Mental Health Services Collaboratives
DCFL:	Department of Children, Families and Learning
DHS:	Department of Human Services
FSC:	Family Services Collaboratives
RBA:	Results-Based Accountability

MINNESOTA MILESTONES: THE STATE'S REPORT CARD FOR THE FUTURE

Minnesota Milestones, the state's long-range plan, which includes measurable goals and indicators of progress, was initiated in 1991 under the direction of Governor Arne Carlson. They were designed to provide the citizens of the state with information about whether the state was making progress toward its long term goals. The Milestones development was guided by citizen input.

History of Minnesota Milestones

Governor's Commitment to Improving Results in Minnesota Led to Minnesota Milestones
Republican governor Arne Carlson began the effort by urging his state planning office to develop an RBA system, with the belief that defining a shared vision, setting goals, and measuring results would lead to a better future for Minnesota's people.[7] The Executive Branch strategic planning agency, the Minnesota Planning Office, provided staff for the development of the Minnesota Milestones. This office is charged with developing comprehensive, long-term strategic plans; coordinating activities at all levels of government; and stimulating civic participation. The decision to house the Minnesota Milestones effort in Minnesota Planning was made because, according to one source, "it was seen as the objective, neutral place where this can happen, in part because it does not directly oversee any programs."

The funding for the development of the Minnesota Milestones came in part from a one-time appropriation from the legislature to the Minnesota Planning Office. The appropriation was given with the understanding that it would help support the Milestones, but was not earmarked as such. The Minnesota Planning Office had resources such as demographers and planners on staff who were able to undertake the development and reporting of the Milestones.

Process of Identifying Goals and Measures

Citizen Input Guided the Milestones Development
The Minnesota Planning Office started the development of the Milestones by engaging in a strategic planning effort. The Office began by looking at Oregon's process for creating the Oregon Shines strategic plan and the Oregon Benchmarks (See *Aiming for Accountability: Oregon*). Minnesota Planning modified the process used by Oregon to build on that state's lessons learned. For example, individuals in Oregon suggested that Minnesota Planning staff talk with communities, largely because staff in Oregon wished that they had obtained more citizen involvement at the beginning. They also suggested that Minnesota keep the number of Milestones small in order to control the process. Minnesota used this information to frame its strategic planning efforts.

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[7] Minnesota Planning. (1992). *Minnesota Milestones: A report card for the future*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

Staff from Minnesota Planning then systematically obtained input from stakeholders and citizens about their values and priorities. The agency divided the state into regions and held meetings with citizens in each region. The public was invited to these meetings, as were staff from other state agencies. Staff used a broad range of communication activities to ensure involvement in these meetings, including issuing press releases, sending invitation letters from the governor to citizens, and posting notices on community college campuses. The meetings were facilitated by staff from Minnesota Planning. Minnesota Planning staff then compiled the information into a vision statement reflecting the priorities of the citizens of the state. Many citizens participated in this process: Approximately 1,000 people attended the focus groups and up to 10,000 participated in statewide meetings.

Vision Statement Used to Guide Articulation of Goals and Measures
The themes developed in the vision statement are still the overarching principles on which the Minnesota Milestones reports are based. They are:

- Minnesota will be a community of people who respect and care for one another;
- Our economic activity will create wealth and provide a good standard of living for all our people;
- Our citizens will be good thinkers, creative, always learning, with the skills to compete internationally; and
- Our government will be responsive, effective, and close to the people.

The Minnesota Planning Office used the above principles to guide the articulation of 20 *goals* and 79 *Milestone measures*. Based on citizens' comments, input from the public, and published work, the agency, along with other agencies' staff, began to identify concrete goals.

Minnesota Planning Agency Worked with Other State Agencies to Identify Measures
The process of developing the Minnesota Milestones involved Minnesota Planning as well as other state agencies. Minnesota Planning staff developed the criteria for the measures, and agency staff assisted with the identification of the measures. Minnesota Planning selected and proposed measures and then obtained feedback from agencies, experts, interested groups, and the public. This process resulted in significant revisions.

The level of agency involvement in identifying measures varied. Several in the state noted that two factors influenced the level of involvement. First, agencies (such as the Health Department) that had a history of collecting outcome data were more likely to be involved. Second, agency directors who had more interest in and more of a personal commitment to the effort were more likely to have their staff involved.

Through the process of working with agencies, Minnesota Planning identified measures for many of the goals. Although some of the goals did not have existing measures, they were nonetheless seen as important. As one staff person from Minnesota Planning noted, "it was very important to have the goals reflect the vision as a first step. As a next step it was important to find data to

measure the values and priorities of the citizens of the state." She stated that if the office began by examining data rather than by developing a vision, the data would drive the system. While the state no longer lists indicators that do not have data, it plans to list some "future indicators," which will be measured in future years as new data become available.

The first set of Milestones reports include data that were already collected by the state and federal sources (such as the Census). The next reports include additional data that Minnesota Planning obtained through different means, such as purchasing data from an independent University of Minnesota survey.

After identifying measures, Minnesota Planning staff, with input from agencies, selected performance targets by: 1) identifying best levels of performance in other states and countries; 2) proposing that the state maintain performance levels that were already high; 3) consulting with experts; 4) seeking consensus; or, 5) projecting trend lines into the future.[8]

Table 5 provides examples of child and family goals, measures, and targets.

Table 5. Example of goals, measures, and targets [9]

Goal 1	Our children will not live in poverty.
Example measures with targets:	Percent of children living in poverty (10% in 1995, 8% in 2000) Percent of parents who receive full payment of awarded child support (No targets were established for this goal)
Goal 2	Families will provide a stable environment for their children.
Example measure with target:	Teen pregnancy rate (12% in 1995, 11.2% in 2000)

Governor Personally Championed Milestones to State Agency Staff

The governor and the Minnesota Planning Office recognized the importance of informing all agency staff about the Milestones early on. To educate agency staff, Minnesota Planning held a large meeting of about 400-500 participants, during which Minnesota Planning staff and the governor presented information about the Milestones to top agency staff. One individual at Minnesota Planning reported, "We thought it was important to put out what the plan was so that all state agencies would get the same message at the same time. Some people did get excited about it. For our part, we had constant dialogue with them." Other efforts to educate staff are

[8] Office of the Legislative Auditor. (1994). *Performance budgeting.* St. Paul, MN: Author.

[9] Minnesota Planning. (1992). *Minnesota Milestones: A report card for the future.* St. Paul, MN: Author.

carried out by the Department of Finance — the agency designated to provide technical assistance to all state agency staff.

Uses of Minnesota Milestones

Milestones Are Designed to Encourage All Minnesotans to Solve Problems Facing the State
The Milestone goals and measures are specified as broad population-level goals and indicators, and as such, are designed to encourage all Minnesotans to focus on the problems facing the state. While many of the Milestones are specific enough to pertain in a direct way to a discrete and significant area of state expenditure, a large portion are the responsibility of every citizen in the state. For example, one goal is that "Our children will not live in poverty," and the Milestone target is "percent of children living in households below the poverty line will be 8% in 2000."

While the Milestones were initially envisioned as tools to assist in government decision making, the Minnesota Planning Office acknowledges that a single government agency cannot be held responsible for goals such as reducing poverty. Further, Minnesota Planning staff now acknowledge that such goals and accompanying Milestones are not designed to be agency performance measures. Nonetheless, Minnesota Planning staff believe that government agencies can engage in certain activities that may lead to reductions in poverty, and that agencies can specify agency-level performance measures that may logically influence this goal. Finally, and perhaps most importantly according to some sources, the government can encourage citizens to engage in activities to deal with this social problem.

To engage citizens with the Milestones, the Minnesota Milestones reports are regularly released to the public. The first report was released in 1992. These reports are available on-line to the public through the Minnesota Planning home page (http://www.mnplan.state.mn.us). Staff from Minnesota Planning state that the home page is a valuable tool in disseminating the Minnesota Milestones reports. Thousands of hard copy reports have also been widely disseminated.

Minnesota Milestones Are Used by the Public, Communities, and Government Agencies
Both the process of developing the Minnesota Milestones and the Milestones themselves have been used in Minnesota. Sources note that citizens throughout the state who engaged in the consensus-building process of identifying the goals used the process to voice their values and priorities. The meetings that Minnesota Planning held throughout the state not only produced data, but also provided an opportunity for civic engagement. In addition, the citizens who have read the Minnesota Milestones reports have used the information to learn about how Minnesota is faring. Communities have used the Minnesota Milestones along with information from the Children's Services Report Card to identify areas of priority need.

Government agencies have used the Minnesota Milestones, according to informants "primarily to set the tone to get government to be more goal oriented." Agencies note that the Milestones provide guiding principles. The Department of Human Services (DHS), for one, has revised its strategic plan around the Milestones. The Milestones are not program-specific but are designed

to provide general policy guidance. As such, DHS has used the Milestones as the guiding principles behind its Title IVb program — a federally funded program that funds activities to promote family preservation and support. The Milestones are also being used as a guiding principle behind its Children's Initiative — an initiative to provide a more comprehensive set of services to families, with the goal of reducing out-of-home placements in foster care. (See Performance Reporting for more details on this initiative).

The Milestones are also being used to guide some agency performance measure reports (See Performance Reporting section for more information.) However, the Minnesota Milestones are not specific enough to be used directly by many legislative committees. Legislators point out that to be useful, RBA data need to be reported consistent with the legislative committee structure. For example, until 1997, foster care data were useful to the legislative committee overseeing foster care, but general information on stable families was not useful because no single legislative committee oversaw this broad issue. However, in 1997, in both the Senate and the House, new committees were created, called the Family and Early Childhood Legislative Committees, which do have jurisdiction over broad early childhood issues.

Lesson Learned: Milestones Reflect Dynamic Nature of the State, and Thus Need to be Updated
At this date, Minnesota Planning staff recognize the need to update the Milestones and have put in place a process to revisit the Milestones to ensure that they reflect the goals and priorities of today's Minnesotans. Minnesota Planning is now undertaking a process to revisit the Minnesota Milestones. The goal is to obtain citizen input to make sure that the Milestones still reflect citizens' priorities, as well as to gather better data to measure children's well-being in Minnesota. The review of the Minnesota Milestones will be done in conjunction with the review and update of the Children's Report Card (See section on Children's Report Card below).

To update the Minnesota Milestones, Minnesota Planning staff will seek the help of experts and citizens through surveys and meetings. The Minnesota Planning Office is conducting an on-line survey available at public libraries. In addition, the Office is conducting a scientific statewide telephone survey (N = 800) through the University of Minnesota to gauge public opinion on how well the state is progressing toward its goals. Minnesota Planning staff will analyze this information and update the Milestones to match the updated values and priorities of citizens in the state. Minnesota Planning staff hope to complete the update by spring 1998.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES REPORT CARD: PROVIDING CHILD AND FAMILY DATA TO COMMUNITIES

The Children's Services Report Card includes 21 indicators of children's well-being, which provide more detailed information than the Milestones. Taken together, these indicators are designed to show what progress has been made for Minnesota's children and families.

History of the Children's Services Report Card

The Children's Services Report Card was first issued in 1993 as an outgrowth of the Minnesota Planning's Minnesota Milestones work. At that time, agency staff recognized both the need for and availability of child and family data. Thus, the agency began regularly reporting these data in a format that local citizens, service providers, and policymakers could use in making decisions about child and family services.

Process of Identifying Goals and Measures

Children's Services Report Card Relies on Federal and State Data Sources

The Minnesota Planning Office has been responsible for gathering the data for the Children's Services Report Card. Data for the Children's Services Report Card are collected from a variety of state and federal sources. All the data in the report had been collected by the state prior to development of the report cards, but were readily accessible to the public. For example, health data had already been collected by the Department of Health, but the Department did not regularly release this information in a public-use format. Seeing a need for such information at the county level, the Minnesota Planning Office began compiling this information and releasing it in 1993. The Office compiles and releases the Children's Services Report Card every two years.

Examples of indicators in this report card are:

- Percent of children living in poverty;
- Abused or neglected children per 1,000 children; and
- Children placed out of home per 1,000 children.

The Children's Services Report Card is now available on-line and can be accessed at many public libraries through DATANET, a computer network operated by the Land Management Information Center at Minnesota Planning.

Lesson Learned: Alignment of Children's Services Report Data and Milestones Data Is an Important Next Step

The staff at Minnesota Planning are in the process of revisiting the Children's Services Report Card to ensure that these data, which are available on a county-by-county basis, are the same as

the measures on the Minnesota Milestones reports. Currently, many of the indicators in the Children's Services Report Card are also measures in the Minnesota Milestones report (such as child poverty rate), but overlap is not total. For example, there is a Milestone measure on the percent of children who have healthy diets, but this measure is not in the Children's Services Report Card. Conversely, the percent of children placed out of home is on the Children's Services Report Card, but is not a measure in the Milestones reports. Minnesota Planning plans to have 100 percent overlap when it updates the Milestones and Children's Services Report Card in 1997-98.

Uses of the Children's Services Report Card Data

The Children's Services Report Card is envisioned as a way to mobilize citizen support for action on behalf of children and families. It is designed as a tool to assist communities in measuring results and setting priorities. Providers, county planners, and others at the local level use this information to identify areas of service need. For example, two different directors of Family Services Collaboratives noted that they were using data on out-of-home placements to track progress toward achieving their goal of increasing family stability in their respective communities. Efforts are underway to identify common indicators that will be used by all collaboratives.

PERFORMANCE REPORTING: THE LEGISLATURE'S RESPONSE TO THE MINNESOTA MILESTONES

Performance reporting in Minnesota was initiated by the legislature in response to the Minnesota Milestones. Since 1993, the state has mandated that state agencies report performance data to the legislature. The Department of Human Services (DHS) and the newly created Department of Children Families and Learning (DCFL) have used the focus on performance reporting to issue performance reports and align agency activities with state goals.

History of Performance Reporting

Legislature Created Performance Reporting in 1993

The performance reporting legislation in Minnesota was enacted by the legislature in 1993 as the state legislature's response to the Minnesota Milestones.[10] Responding to the call for greater accountability, the state legislature enacted the performance measurement law in 1993, which requires annual performance reporting by state agencies. The legislation required that each agency develop measures and report them as part of its budget request. The performance measures were envisioned as providing an additional source of information to be used by legislators in budget deliberations.

The legislation mandates that the Department of Finance develop the forms and instructions, coordinate training, and work with state agencies to develop performance measures. In addition, the law requires the Legislative Auditor to review the reports and provide comment to the legislature and agencies on a rotating biennial schedule.[11]

The performance reporting legislation was passed with the intent of giving citizens information to monitor agency performance. Specifically, the legislature enacted the law requiring performance measures because, according to one member, "the law put discipline into the process." There was little deliberation over the legislation; according to one source, "Who could say 'no' to finding out how well agencies are performing?"

Performance Reporting Not New

The 1993 performance reporting legislation followed attempts to reform the budget process that began in the 1960s.[12] In 1969, the legislature expressed a desire for performance-based budgets, and over a half dozen laws have been enacted since then to improve the budget process. Partly because of dissatisfaction with the performance measure legislation of the past, the 1993

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[10] *Minnesota laws.* (1993). Ch. 192, Secs. 35 and 39-41. *Minnesota laws.* (1994). Ch. 632, Art. 3, Sec. 18. Also, *Minnesota laws.* (1995). Ch. 254, Art 1, Sec. 43.

[11] *Minnesota laws.* (1993). Ch. 192, Secs. 35 and 39-41. *Minnesota laws.* (1994). Ch. 632, Art. 3, Sec. 18. Also, *Minnesota laws.* (1995). Ch. 254, Art 1, Sec. 43.

[12] Office of the Legislative Auditor. (1994). *Performance budgeting.* St. Paul, MN: Author.

legislature (with support of the governor) passed new performance measures legislation which outlined new agency reporting requirements.[13] The intent was that, by specifying the content of agency reports, the new law would provide information that would be used by the legislature to determine whether programs were successful.

Process of Identifying Performance Measures

Executive Agency Charged with Overseeing Development of Performance Measures
The 1993 legislation charged the Department of Finance with overseeing the process of developing the performance measures. While the authorizing legislation did not require agencies to incorporate the Minnesota Milestones into their performance reports, the Department of Finance instructed agencies to consider them. The Department of Finance stated that this was because the Milestones "have a key role in executive branch decisions." In addition, multiple sources note that the governor's support of the Milestones was an important factor in having the Department of Finance support incorporating them into the performance reports.

The original authorizing legislation allowed each agency to determine its own performance measures. While this law did not specify measures, it did specify the process that agencies were to use in the development of measures. Each agency was required to use staff committees known as "Worker Participation Committees" to identify goals and measures.[14] These teams were to select key goals and measures. During the first year, these committees were uneven in their success across agencies. In some agencies the committees developed goals and measures that staff believed were satisfactory. In other agencies the committees did not meet or met simply to fulfill the legislative requirement. The committees were more likely to meet successfully during the subsequent performance reports cycle because agencies had more time to plan these and had better instructions about what the committees were designed to do.

Multiple State Agencies Provided Training on Developing Performance Measures
Training for developing the performance measures was conducted by three different state agencies as well as external consultants. The Department of Finance provided some training on performance budgeting for agency heads, program managers, and budget staff, although Finance staff had received no special training on how to help staff develop performance measures.[15] Training was also provided by the Department of Administration. In addition, agencies could request input from the legislative audit committee during the process of developing measures, if they so chose. The legislative audit committee read agency reports, reviewed the measures, and gave detail-by-detail feedback. Finally, technical assistance support was provided by a consultant from the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) at the University of Minnesota. This consultant was hired by many agencies to help them develop

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[13] Office of the Legislative Auditor. (1994). *Performance budgeting*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

[14] Office of the Legislative Auditor. (1994). *Performance budgeting*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

[15] Office of the Legislative Auditor. (1994). *Performance budgeting*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

outcomes and indicators for prevention and intervention initiatives. Other consultants have assisted the Family Services and Children's Mental Health Collaboratives (CMHC).
During the first round of performance reporting, numerous sources and the Legislative Auditor noted that training could have been improved. For example, the instructions by the Department of Finance were seen as needing additional definitions of key terms, such as goals and objectives.[16] Nonetheless, sources noted that training was very important in the development of the performance measures. Agencies expressed a preference for "tailored" training and personal training on performance measures.

State Agencies Absorbed the Cost of Developing Performance Measures
When the state legislature passed the performance reporting law, it did not appropriate additional funds for implementing the law. As a result, agencies reallocated staff time for training as well as for development of the performance measures. The Legislative Auditor's office estimated that the cost of the first set of performance reports in 1994 was about $1 million. According to the Legislative Auditor's report, many state agency managers believe that the cost will be reduced in subsequent years. [17]

Lesson Learned: Additional Time for Development of Performance Measures Seen as Helpful
The development of performance measures was very time and labor intensive, according to multiple sources. Developing these measures required many hours, as well as time for staff to absorb the information. Identifying goals and outcomes involved "shifting the thinking" of individuals in state agencies who had been held accountable for following instructions regarding process and inputs for many decades. In addition, many employees believed the latest performance measures requirements were "a passing fad," and were therefore reluctant to change their thinking and behavior until they saw that the requirements would last. Nonetheless, agencies developed the performance measures, and the first set of reports was released in 1994.

According to multiple sources, the time allocated for the development of the first set of performance reports could have been improved. Additional time and training would have allowed agencies to develop better performance measures. For example, in one agency, the goals and measures in the first report were "Bill's Goals" because the agency did not have time to reflect on their priorities and measures and "Bill came up with a good list." The additional time and training for subsequent performance reports have led to significant improvements in the quality of the measures in state agency performance reports, according to numerous sources and the Legislative Auditor. For example, the Legislative Auditor's office noted that the DCFL and the DHS 1996 Performance reports displayed improvements over the 1994 reports. Individuals in each department indicated that a range of factors had led to these improvements, including having additional time to prepare the reports and to allow staff to "shift their thinking toward

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[16] Office of the Legislative Auditor. (1994). *Comments on the 1994 performance measures*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

[17] Office of the Legislative Auditor. (1994). *Comments on the 1994 performance measures*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

outcomes." With the passage of time and the constant message from multiple agencies and department heads, staff did become more willing to "think in terms of goals and outcomes."

Uses of Performance Reports

Performance Reports Provide Consistent Information across Agencies
The performance reports are required to include common data elements. They are: goals, objectives, measures, definitions, data sources, discussion of past performance, plan to achieve targets, and information on other factors affecting performance. All agencies are required to complete the reports in a standard format.[18] The reports are designed to include information that will be useful to multiple audiences. For example, information on how to achieve targets is designed to provide agency managers and staff with information about ways to meet future goals. Information on factors that may affect performance is targeted toward policymakers to assist them with understanding the multiple factors that are influencing changes. Table 6 provides an example of the reporting framework.

DHS Issues Performance Reports
DHS is a large umbrella agency responsible for many human services from medical assistance to child protection and welfare services. This agency oversees multiple programs that provide services to children and their families, and many of these services have an outcome focus. Two examples of DHS performance reports serve to highlight the ways in which performance reporting has been put into practice in Minnesota.

DHS began the process of developing performance reports in 1994. Learning from that experience, DHS began preparing the 1996 report early and asked staff to review the 1994 performance report to identify key measures that would be included in the updated report. Key measures included those that were closely tied to the department mission, as well as measures that could potentially support budget initiatives. Goal statements were refined. In the area of children's grants, three measures from the earlier report were retained, three were developed, and twenty-four were eliminated.[19]

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[18] While the Department of Children, Families and Learning is not required to report all of these data elements, it is required to follow the standard template for reporting.

[19] Department of Human Services. *Agency performance report*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

Table 6. Example of Performance Measure for DHS [20]

Goal 1: To reduce the number of children in out-of-home placement 50% by the year 2005, by focusing on prevention and support; to reduce unnecessary out-of-home placement; and to reduce the need for out-of-home placement.

Objective 1: The number of out-of-home placements of children in Minnesota will be reduced.

Measure 1: The number of out-of-home placements of children in Minnesota.

	1995	1996	1997
Number of children			
Actual	18,492	18,000	
Target			17,000

Definition:
The official annual count of out-of-home placements of children in Minnesota, based on reports of the counties to the Department of Human Services.

Data Source:
County reports to the Department of Human Services.

Discussion of Past Performance:
Out-of-home placement of children in Minnesota has been increasing for many years despite efforts to improve the situation. The Children's Initiative has taken the lead in bringing this issue to public attention and in working with counties to pursue alternatives to placement.

Plan to Achieve Targets:
Many new approaches have been developed and implemented to address the situation. These approaches include incentives for collaboration among local governmental and private agencies, prevention programs, increased funding for crisis nurseries, development of more alternatives to out-of-home placement, and intensified efforts to reunite families safely as quickly and permanently as possible where out-of-home placement of children has already occurred.

Other Factors Affecting Performance:
Poverty, the increase in single parent families, drug and alcohol abuse, mental health issues, educational outcomes, and court decisions all affect the need for out-of-home placement of children. Changes in legislation at federal and state levels, socioeconomic conditions or shifts in conditions, and policy changes at any level of government all can affect the need for out-of-home placement of children. Changes in legislation at federal and state levels, socioeconomic conditions or shifts in conditions, and policy changes at any level of government all can affect annual counts of out-of-home placements in ways that might not relate directly to the success of family preservation programs in Minnesota.

DHS's Children's Initiative Aligns Services with Minnesota Milestones via Performance Reporting

One section of the 1996 DHS performance report that includes child and family outcomes is the

[20] Department of Human Services. (1996). *Agency performance report.* St. Paul, MN: Author.

section describing the Children's Initiative — an inter-agency effort designed "to pull together resources and expertise to ensure positive outcomes for children at-risk in all DHS services." [21] This section includes data that demonstrate the alignment of the state's Children's Initiative with the Minnesota Milestones goal of reducing out-of-home placement.

The Children's Initiative is the DHS effort to improve child and family services by increasing family stability. The Children's Initiative has administrative responsibility over child protection, adoption assistance, foster care and other child welfare services, children's mental health, community services, and development of the social services information system.[22] The Children's Initiative goal is to reduce the number of out-of-home placements by supporting a continuum of family support and family preservation services to maintain children safely within their families.[23]

The 1996 performance report section on the Children's Initiative includes data on the goal of reducing the number of children in out-of-home placements. In addition, this section includes more refined data on specific sub-populations of children, such as American Indian children and children with special needs. Data on these children are reported because DHS receives categorical federal funding for these categories of children.[24] The Children's Initiative focuses all relevant children's grants within DHS on achieving the out-of-home placement goals. These grants are administered through the Department's Family and Children's Services Division — a division which administers 25 state and federal programs focused on preventing families with children from experiencing a crisis, ensuring that services are focused on positive outcomes for children, and promoting permanency and stability for children who cannot live with their birth parents.[25] The division is focusing on results to coordinate the different programs.

DHS's Community Services Division: Performance Reporting in Practice

Another example of child and family outcome data in the DHS 1996 performance report is reported by the Community Services Division. This Division of DHS works with the DHS administrative and program staff, county human service agency boards and staff, collaborative groups, and public and private service provider organizations. It is involved in efforts to eliminate unnecessary requirements, streamline process, and focus attention on results. The principles on which its work is based are a partnership approach, a bottom-up view of defining outcomes, and provision of hands-on assistance.[26] The work of this office is important in

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[21] Department of Human Services. (1996). *Agency performance report: Executive summary*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

[22] Department of Human Services. (1996). *Agency performance report: Executive summary*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

[23] Department of Human Services. (1996). *Agency performance report: Executive summary*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

[24] Department of Human Services. (1996). *Agency performance report*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

[25] Department of Human Services. (1996). *Agency performance report*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

[26] Department of Human Services, Community Services Division. (1996). *Focus on client outcomes: A guidebook*

focusing DHS on outcomes, particularly necessary since approximately one-third of the target population in the state receives community-based services.

The 1996 performance report includes data on the goal of assisting local county human services agencies with implementation and ongoing utilization of client-focused outcome-based approach to services management. The measure of performance is the number of county agencies demonstrating a working knowledge of a client-focused outcomes-based evaluation framework.

To achieve this goal, the Community Services Division has developed materials to disseminate to communities on the development of client-focused goals and outcome indicators to facilitate management decision-making based on results. It has developed an outcome development worksheet, a guidebook entitled *Focus on Client Outcomes: A Guidebook for Results-Oriented Human Services*, and other materials. In addition, this group has provided hands-on assistance to organizations struggling to make the change to client-focused, outcome-based service planning and management.

The Department of Children, Families and Learning: An Example of How Agencies Adapt Performance Reporting to Meet Legislative Needs

The Department of Children, Families and Learning (DCFL), a new agency created in 1995 to consolidate education with child and family support services, has developed performance measures reports in compliance with two separate legislative requirements. The new Department was created July 1, 1995 with the mandate to improve the well-being of children and families by providing more comprehensive, integrated services and by increasing the capacity of Minnesota communities to provide collaborative and integrated services. To achieve this goal, the Department is designed to improve public accountability and provide research and information on the development of measurable program outcomes. When the new Department was created, the old Department of Education was abolished, effective June 30, 1995. The DCFL includes all functions previously carried out in the Department of Education, and some functions previously in the Departments of Economic Security, Human Services, Corrections, and Public Safety, and the Minnesota Planning Agency.

Unlike most other state agencies, DCFL is required to produce two reports: a department report and a "system" report. These reports provide complementary information; the System Report provides detailed data about how the system is doing; and the Department Report provides information about how the department is assisting schools and communities in reaching their goals. This is because the DCFL as a department has responsibility and authority over building the capacity at the state and local level, while the entire school system has responsibility and authority over improving outcomes for children.

The System Performance Report, mandated under the 1995 Omnibus K-12 Education Bill, requires DCFL to develop a report on the quality and performance of the Minnesota educational

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for results-oriented human services. St. Paul, MN: Author.

system.[27] It is exempted from some performance reporting requirements, such as the inclusion of a mission statement, objectives, and projected performance targets. In it, DCFL reports on key early childhood, elementary, middle, and secondary education programs. This information "is consistent with how the department defines its role — as service provider to other entities, such as school districts and communities."[28] By contrast, the Department Report, which is developed by DCFL to fulfill the performance measurement requirement, is similar to most state agency department reports, and provides information on the department's own programs and services. As such, this report emphasizes the role of building local capacity and facilitating services. The goals reported in the Department and Systems reports cover the same nine areas:

- Learning readiness;
- Safe, caring communities;
- Healthy children;
- Stable families;
- Learner success;
- Information technologies;
- Lifework development;
- Lifelong learning; and
- Finance and management.

While all nine goals are a reflection of DCFL's mission, some also overlap with the Minnesota Milestones. For example, stable families is a Minnesota Milestone and a department goal while Information Technologies is solely a department goal. Table 7 shows how the goal, stable families, is articulated in both system and department reports.

[27] Department of Children, Families and Learning. (1996). *Performance report.* St. Paul, MN: Author.

[28] Office of the Legislative Auditor. (1997). *Comments on the 1996 biennial performance report.* St. Paul, MN: Author.

Table 7. Example of Department of Children, Families and Learning Goals [29]

Goal	System	Department
Stable Families	Individuals in poverty will be supported, and all families will provide a stable environment for their children.	The Department will build the capacity of the state and its local communities to support individuals in poverty and help all families provide a stable environment for their children.

The separation of performance data into two reports provides readers with clear information about which goals are the responsibility of the department and which are the responsibility of the system. Agency staff note that this is especially important since education in Minnesota is mostly a local responsibility. As such, it is important that the state agency be held accountable only for issues over which it ultimately has responsibility and authority. According to numerous sources, the 1996 performance reports were much more successful than the 1994 report because the two reports clearly delineated who had responsibility and authority over which outcomes.

DCFL Will Include Graduation Standards in Future Reports

In 1994 the state legislature required the development of graduation standards to "define what a Minnesota public high school graduate should know and be able to do to function effectively as a purposeful thinker, effective communicator, self-directed learner, productive group participant, and responsible citizen."[30] The legislation was passed because many believed the standards would reflect a shift from the existing state graduation rule, which required students to complete a designated number of courses successfully, but did not specify what students should learn or the quality of work they should produce.[31] The department is currently developing student- and school-level outcome data that will be included in subsequent performance reports. These data will be generated through new assessments developed under the new "graduation standards." These standards, developed under the direction of the State Board of Education, are designed to include assessments that each 12th grader in the state will be required to pass in order to graduate.[32] These graduation standards are designed to focus schools and students on results. The DCFL is responsible for developing rule specifications, piloting proposed graduation standards and assisting schools in their understanding and implementation. Training and statewide implementation of the standards is scheduled to be completed in 1999.

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[29] Department of Children, Families and Learning. (1996). *System performance measure report*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

[30] Minn. rules. (1996). Ch. 3501: *Rules relating to graduation standards*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

[31] Department of Children, Families and Learning. *YEAR Graduation standards*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

[32] Department of Children, Families and Learning. (1996). *Performance report*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

Lessons Learned: Performance Reports Must Be Concise and Easy to Read by Legislators
While the performance reports are designed to provide information to inform the legislative process, the information is not currently being fully used. The initial intent was that the performance reports would provide information for two purposes: to assist legislators in their deliberations over budgets and to focus departments on their goals and outcomes. Legislators report that, to date, it is difficult to say to what extent the reports have been used. One legislator reported, "We ask people to report back to us all the time, but the question is whether we sat down and made sure we had an adequate understanding. As a legislative body, we don't look backward. We ask for things, but then tend to just move forward." In addition, legislators report that they currently refer to the line-item budgets, and that to be useful, the performance reports must be concise and easy to read, and the data need to be aligned with the line-item budget data.

However, some state agency personnel have noted that the process of developing the reports has focused departments on their goals. The hope is that over time, the reports will be used more by the legislature. Legislative action in 1997 created a working group that will substantially change agency performance reporting. This group may recommend changes such as discontinuing the reports, merging the reports into the budget process, or modifying the reports so that they can be more easily used by legislative committees.

FAMILY SERVICES AND CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH COLLABORATIVES

History of the Family Services and Children's Mental Health Collaboratives

The Family Services and Children's Mental Health Collaboratives, created in 1993 as a bi-partisan effort by the state legislature with the support of Governor Arne Carlson, provide funding to establish local collaborative initiatives to integrate services and improve outcomes for children and families. Funding for these Collaboratives comes primarily through two separate pieces of legislation: the Family Services Collaboratives legislation and the Comprehensive Children's Mental Health Act.[33] DCFL is responsible for overseeing the Family Services Collaboratives (FSCs) and DHS is responsible for the Children's Mental Health Collaboratives (CMHCs).[34] However, the Collaboratives are a joint effort of the agencies that make up the Children's Cabinet. Interagency staff meet regularly with local partners as Focus Teams to problem solve and provide technical assistance to collaboratives.

FSCs receive a biennial appropriation of $14.5 million in state funds.[35] In addition, the Legislature appropriated funds for the CMHCs. Ten of the CMHCs have merged with the Family Services Collaboratives. The state is aiming for all CMHCs to become integrated with the FSCs by the year 2000.

To be eligible for state funds, localities are required to include partners from education, health, community action agencies, or Head Start, and county government, and to establish a governance structure to design and develop the collaborative.[36] Currently, 63 collaboratives receive funds, which are used to serve over 90 percent of the population of Minnesota's children age birth through 18.

Process of Identifying Outcomes

Collaboratives Are Required to Report Outcomes

Collaboratives are required by law to report outcomes, but are not currently required to align the goals with the Minnesota Milestones. The legislation authorizing the FSCs requires that the agency overseeing the collaboratives produce an outcomes report within two years of receiving

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[33] The Pew Charitable Trusts, through the Minnesota Children's Initiative, provides additional funds to three of the collaborative sites.

[34] Initially, funds for the Collaboratives flowed through Minnesota Planning.

[35] Department of Children, Families and Learning. (1997). *The collaborative directory*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

[36] Department of Children, Families and Learning. (1997). "Family services and community-based collaboratives, Statutes 121.8355." *The collaborative directory*.

initial funding. The Milestones provide a broad framework, with the hope that the local performance measures will link with the state measures.

Consultants Helped Collaboratives Determine Outcomes

To set up a process for establishing and measuring outcomes, the local collaboratives staff met with state agency staff in a focus group to develop a request for proposals to hire consultants that would provide local technical assistance.[37] The state then hired consultants from CAREI at the University of Minnesota to fulfill the requirements for the outcome report required by the legislature and to design an evaluation that maintained the focus on local control.

The evaluation consultants developed a broad set of evaluation questions that were intended to obtain comparable outcomes across multiple sites. The consultants' role was to provide technical assistance to sites related to their evaluation designs, summarize information from the reporting documents, and share findings related to the evaluation questions.[38] The consultants developed a resource for local collaboratives that was used in training. This resource provided a literature review on collaborative initiatives, sample instruments for measuring outcomes, and resources on innovative methods for measuring outcomes. (For full text see *Collaborative Initiatives to Develop Integrated Services for Children and Families: An Outcome Evaluation Resource Manual, March 1996.*)

The consultants assisted the localities in defining their own outcomes. At the local level, each collaborative defines its own outcomes; currently there are no common instruments used across collaboratives. The authorizing legislation allows localities to focus on the measures of their choice and does not specify how collaboratives are to be evaluated. This legislation is broadly interpreted to allow localities to define their own methodologies. Thus, many are using indicator data to show results. As one source noted, "If indicators change, this will be seen as a change in outcomes." For example, many collaboratives are measuring client satisfaction with services, and each collaborative has designed its own survey and reports the data differently.

Further, under the collaborative initiatives, the incentive grants provided to local bodies are used for a variety of purposes, and evaluation is only one of many purposes. Each collaborative is allowed to select the emphasis of its collaborative activities and choose its own outcomes; however, no money is set aside, per se, for collecting and reporting outcome data. While each collaborative is allowed to choose its own outcomes, the authorizing legislation specifies that FSCs are to focus on four broad areas related to children and youth:

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[37] Department of Children, Families and Learning. (1997). *Family services collaboratives.* St. Paul, MN: Author.

[38] Ingram, D. and Seppanen, P. (Revised 1996). *Minnesota's family services and Children's Mental Health Collaboratives: A summary of two-year outcome reports and outcome evaluation plans.* Minneapolis, MN: Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement.

- Health;
- Development;
- Education; and
- Family-related needs.

Each collaborative also determines its own short-term and longer-term indicators of progress. Since the state does not issue criteria about what constitutes short- versus long-term indicators, a short-term indicator of progress for one collaborative may be considered a longer-term indicator for another collaborative.

Table 8 provides an example of short-term and longer-term indicators and results related to family needs (specifically Family Functioning).

Table 8. Indicators and Results from Selected Collaboratives [39]

Type of Indicator/ Result	Cass County/Leech Lake Reservation	South Central Children's Project/Blue Earth and Nicollett Counties
Short-term Indicator	Increase in program participation	Maintain a flattened level of dollars spent on out-of-home placements
Short-Term Result	*Data not yet available*	4,178 out-of-home bed days were averted at an estimated cost savings of $296,400
Long-Term Indicator	Decrease in number of out-of-home placements	Expand variety and capacity for community-based wrap-around services
Long-Term Result	*Data not yet available*	*Data not yet available*

Lesson Learned: Collaboratives Outcomes Activities Vary, Reflecting State Flexibility
The state has learned that while granting flexibility can lead to articulation of community-

[39] Ingram, D. and Seppanen, P. (Revised 1996). *Minnesota's family services and Children's Mental Health Collaboratives: A summary of two-year outcome reports and outcome evaluation plans.* Minneapolis, MN: Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement

tailored outcomes, standardization of these outcomes could be an important next step. The level of effort spent in developing and reporting outcomes by the CHMCs and FSCs varies — reflecting the state's flexibility in defining measures and in devoting resources to outcomes activities. Each collaborative is required to use its grant to engage in 10 separate types of activities ranging from establishing a comprehensive planning process to identifying policy barriers. Developing outcome-based indicators of progress is one of the activities that collaboratives are required to engage in. Funding for this purpose comes out of the state grant; however, the state does not specify the amount of the grant to be used for this purpose. As a result, the amount of funds spent on data collection and reporting varies across sites.

In addition, the outcomes vary substantially from one collaborative to the next. Despite specifying the four focus areas, collaboratives were designed to reflect local needs and priorities. In addition, local collaboratives may receive funding from multiple sources with differing priorities, which can influence the mission of the collaborative. As many in the state noted, "If you've seen one collaborative — you've seen one collaborative." Learning from these experiences, a state team is now working to coordinate and standardize outcomes and indicators across collaboratives.

Uses of Outcome Focus

Collaboratives Ready to Use Outcomes to Focus Their Efforts

While collaboratives vary in their use of outcomes, many have used the Milestones, the Children's Services Report Card data, and the process of fulfilling the collaborative evaluation requirements to focus their efforts. For example, some counties choose the area of improving family stability as a priority because it is aligned with the Milestones and the DHS Children's Initiative goal. As service integration has increased, the ability and sophistication of local collaboratives to focus on results-based data have also increased. In addition, some were able to use data from the Children's Services Report Card to determine areas of need.

COORDINATION OF RBA INFORMATION ACROSS EFFORTS

Minnesota has established a network of formal and informal mechanisms to coordinate and exchange RBA information. Two formal mechanisms that encourage coordination among the child and families RBA efforts are the Children's Cabinet and the Interagency Policy Group.

The Children's Cabinet

The Children's Cabinet meets regularly to discuss child and family policy. This Cabinet is composed of the 11 commissioners of state child and family services agencies: the departments of Children, Families and Learning; Health; Human Services; Economic Security; Corrections; Transportation; Finance; Public Safety; Administration; the Housing and Finance Agency; and Minnesota Planning.[40] This body may discuss Milestones, data from the Children's Report Card, or issues around the Collaboratives.

The Interagency Policy Group

A second body, the Interagency Policy Group, composed of assistant commissioners, parents, and representatives from the Collaboratives, makes more targeted policy decisions. As with the Children's Cabinet, this body may discuss a variety of RBA issues. A third entity, the Focus Teams, are working groups that are composed of representatives from the Collaboratives and state agencies, which meet regularly to coordinate issues in five areas: governance, service delivery, fiscal integration, data management, and evaluation. The Evaluation Focus Team meets regularly to discuss evaluation and outcomes issues that relate mostly to the Collaboratives.

Informal Mechanisms That Promote Coordination of RBA Information

Informal mechanisms that encourage coordination among the RBA efforts include using common consultants and developing informal working groups. For example, Minnesota Planning is in the process of coordinating the Milestones efforts with those of the Children's Services Report Card. A second example is the Interagency Early Childhood Informal Network. This group is attempting to coordinate the different outcomes and indicators that are required by different federal and state initiatives ranging from Head Start to the state Early Childhood Family Education program. Currently each of these initiatives has its own set of outcome reporting requirements, which increases fragmentation rather than coordination. The goal of this group is to develop one common set of outcomes for all early childhood programs.

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[40] Department of Children, Families and Learning. (1997). *Family services collaboratives*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

CONCLUSION: MINNESOTA'S RBA EFFORTS REFLECT STATE'S EMPHASIS ON HOME-GROWN, LOCAL SOLUTIONS

Minnesota's various RBA efforts reflect the importance of home-grown, local solutions to problems in the state. Most child and family services in Minnesota profiled in this report are state administered but locally controlled. Therefore, the design of the RBA efforts takes into account who is responsible for achieving results as well as who has the authority to achieve them.

A challenge that the state now faces is achieving a balance between allowing agencies, programs, and localities a choice in outcomes while maintaining a level of coordination among the RBA efforts. Minnesota is in the process of developing mechanisms, such as those listed on the previous pages, to coordinate the RBA effort in the state. While many in the state believe that focusing on a common set of outcomes could increase coordination and collaboration among state agencies and programs, the emphasis on local outcomes challenges the coordination efforts. Nonetheless, coordination of these efforts is a critical next step.

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OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

Objectives

The objective of this case study is to describe the design, development, and implementation of Minnesota's RBA efforts, particularly those related to programs serving children and families. This report is directed toward people who are interested in learning about the efforts of this state and/or who may have a role in developing an RBA system in their own state, locality, or institution. The case study discusses the key RBA efforts in the state, the impetus for and history of these efforts, the governance structures, the design and implementation of these efforts (including the identification of goals, indicators, and targets), the current or proposed use of the systems, and some of the lessons learned.

Scope

HFRP has produced RBA case studies of eight states: Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, and Vermont. The research for these case studies was conducted between January 1996 and November 1997.

Methodology

HFRP staff utilized qualitative data collection methodologies to gather the information included in these case studies. Staff began the selection of the eight states chosen for our case studies by contacting key informants from national organizations who have been working in the area of RBA. These key informants nominated a number of states that were currently planning, designing, and/or implementing RBA systems for child and family programs. HFRP staff then contacted staff in these states and reviewed documents to learn more about the nature of their efforts. Additionally, HFRP contacted staff in a number of other states to learn if they were engaged in the development of RBA systems for child and family programs and, if so, what the nature of efforts was. Based on this research, HFRP staff identified the efforts of eighteen states, which are highlighted in our publication, *Resource Guide of Results-Based Accountability Efforts: Profiles of Selected States (1997)*.

From the eighteen states profiled, HFRP selected eight states to study in-depth. The eight case study states were chosen because they represent different foci as well as various stages of development. These states are implementing a variety of accountability approaches, including statewide and agency-level strategic planning, performance-based budgeting, and performance-based contracting. Each state has conceptualized and developed its system in response to its needs, as well as the technical, organizational, and political constraints within which it operates.

To obtain information on each of the eight states' RBA efforts, HFRP staff reviewed a variety of documentation and conducted extensive telephone interviews with key informants at the state and local levels. Staff then conducted week-long site visits to each state. During each site visit, staff interviewed a number of personnel from governors' offices, state and local agencies,

legislatures, advocacy groups, and universities. During these interviews, interviewees were asked about the key aspects of the conceptualization, development, and implementation of RBA systems. They were also asked about challenges they faced in developing these efforts and the lessons that they had learned. Where possible, HFRP staff also attended planning meetings around RBA work. For each case study, HFRP interviewed at least 30 individuals with a variety of affiliations to obtain a comprehensive and varied view of the state's efforts.

Given the variety of RBA efforts in states, the multiple entities and actors involved, and the many components of these efforts, HFRP staff developed a multi-level analytic framework to examine the data. This framework enabled HFRP to code interview data by four categories: the system (for example, strategic planning, performance budgeting, performance contracting); the governance level (for example, statewide, inter-agency, agency, local entity); the aspect of the system (for example, history, design and implementation, uses, barriers and opportunities, sustainability); and the actor (for example, governor's staff; legislators/staff; agency staff; advocacy groups). In some cases, these dimensions were further refined. This multiple coding enabled HFRP staff to compile comprehensive descriptions of efforts in each state based on a variety of perspectives. This framework also enabled staff to examine a variety of cross-case themes (for example, the use of budgeting systems by legislatures across states and the processes agencies in different states have used to choose goals and indicators). A qualitative software package, NUD*IST©, facilitated analysis of the data.

We recognize that RBA systems are evolving and will continue to evolve in response to both implementation challenges and state and national policy changes. Therefore, we stress that the information contained in these case studies describes these states' RBA initiatives as of November 1997.

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